SUPERMAN
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NATIONAL COMICS

"The CHALLENGER WHO QUIT!"

CHALLENGERS OF THE UNKNOWN

APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY

12¢

JAN.
NO. 41

STAY OUT OF THIS, *ROCKY!* YOU QUIT THE TEAM, REMEMBER? WE'LL HANDLE THE *QUADRUPLE MAN* WITHOUT YOU!

HAVING MIRACULOUSLY ESCAPED DEATH, THE *CHALLENGERS* CLAIMED THEY WERE LIVING ON BORROWED TIME- ALWAYS READY TO TAKE ON THE WEIRD, THE INEXPLICABLE... THE *UNKNOWN!*

CHALLENGERS OF THE UNKNOWN

NOW, PLUNGED INTO ONE OF THEIR MOST TERRIFYING MYSTERIES, THREE OF THE FAMED FOURSOME NOT ONLY SEE THEIR BORROWED TIME RUNNING OUT, BUT THEY'RE STAGGERED BY STILL ANOTHER UNEXPECTED PUNCH...

the CHALLENGER Who QUIT!

A STRANGE APPARITION LOOMS IN THE HEART OF THE CITY...

...BECOMES MORE SOLID...

IT'S SOME KIND OF A *BUILDING*, ISN'T IT?

YEAH-- WITH A *FACE!* BUT WHERE IN BLAZES DID IT *COME* FROM?

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CHALLENGERS OF THE UNKNOWN, No. 41, Dec.,'64 - Jan.,'65. Published bi-monthly by NATIONAL PERIODICAL PUBLICATIONS, INC., 2nd & Dickey Sts., SPARTA, ILL. Editorial, Executive offices and Subscriptions, 575 LEXINGTON AVE., NEW YORK 22, N.Y. Murray Boltinoff, Editor. SECOND CLASS POSTAGE PAID AT SPARTA, ILL. under the act of March 3, 1879. Yearly subscription in the U.S., 70c including postage. Foreign, $1.40 in American funds. Canada, 85c in American funds. For advertising rates address Richard A. Feldon & Co., 205 East 42nd Street, New York 17, N.Y. Copyright 1964 by National Periodical Publications, Inc. All rights reserved under International and Pan-American Copyright Conventions. Except for those who have authorized use of their names, the stories, characters and incidents mentioned in this periodical are entirely imaginary and fictitious, and no identification with actual persons, living or dead, is intended or should be inferred.

Printed in U.S.A.

IT MATERIALIZED OUT OF THIN AIR!

REAL KOOKIE!

CRAZY, MAN! NOBODY'S IN THERE -- NOTHING'S MOVIN'! Y' KNOW, THIS THING GIVES ME THE WILLIES--AN' I GOT THAT FEELIN' LIKE SOMEONE OUGHTTA BUST OPEN THE SILENCE WITH A BEATLES RECORD...

HEY, GUYS! NOBODY WANTS TO TINKER WITH THAT, WHATEVER IT IS! SO IT'S IN OUR LAPS, AS USUAL! I GOT A ROPE AND A DELAYED-ACTION BOMB, AND--

KNOCK OFF THE GAB! LET'S GO UP AND SEE WHAT IT'S ALL ABOUT... AND BRING ALONG THAT FIRECRACKER!

LASSOING A PROJECTION, RED RYAN, CONQUEROR OF MOUNTAINS, GOES UP FIRST-- WHILE A HUMAN LADDER FORMS BELOW...

ACE MORGAN, JET PILOT IS NEXT...

FOLLOWED BY PROF HALEY, FAMED DEEP-SEA DIVER...

AND "ANCHOR MAN" ROCKY DAVIS, OLYMPICS WRESTLING CHAMP...

IT'S A MAZE!

YEAH--BUT WHAT KIND O' MAZE? WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT? LET'S GO DOWN FOR A LOOK-SEE!

I DON'T SEE ANYTHING--BUT I KEEP GETTING THAT CERTAIN FEELING SOMETHING'S ABOUT TO HAPPEN! TRIGGER THE BOMB, RED--THEN WE'LL SCRAM!

ALL SET! SHE'S TIMED TO GO BOOM IN FIVE MINUTES! HIT THE ROAD, FELLERS!

TICK TOCK TICK TOCK TICK TOCK

TICK TOCK TICK TOCK

WHAT'S HAPPENIN'?

BLI

THE WALLS ARE MOVING! THE WHOLE PLACE IS GONNA TUMBLE ON US!

CLICK CLICK

NOTHING FELL--BUT THE WALLS SWITCHED POSITIONS! THE EXIT'S BLOCKED--WE'RE TRAPPED! GET THE BOMB, RED! DEACTIVATE IT!

TICK TICK TICK TOCK

CAN'T FIND IT, ACE! THE WALLS HID IT!

THEN HIT THE DECK! TIME'S HUNGRY--AND IT'S GOBBLING UP OUR FIVE MINUTES!

TICK-TOCK

THE CHALLENGERS! THEY GOT CAUGHT IN THE BLAST! IT'S ALL OVER WITH THEM!

VROOM

BUT WHEN THE SMOKE CLEARS...

WOW! WE MUST BE CATS WITH NINE LIVES! EVERYBODY OKAY?

YEAH-- I THINK SO... NO, HOLD IT! WHAT'S WRONG WITH ROCKY?

PLAY IT COOL, PAL! OUTSIDE OF HEARIN' A LITTLE WAY-OUT MUSIC-- I'M OKAY...

HEY! LOOK AROUND! NOT A SIGN OF DEBRIS FROM THAT EXPLOSION... NOT EVEN A SHRED OF EVIDENCE THAT MAZE WAS EVER HERE!

BOY, DID WE WALK INTO SOMETHING-- A MYSTERY THAT WASN'T THERE!

HOURS LATER...

OFFICIAL QUARTERS ARE STILL BUZZING OVER THE STRANGE DOINGS DOWN-TOWN TODAY! THE **CHALLENGERS** MIRACULOUSLY SURVIVED THE BLAST-- BUT NOT ONE PARTICLE OF DUST WAS LEFT OF THE THING! **IT VANISHED...**

BACK AT **CHALLENGER** MOUNTAIN, THREE DAYS PASS WITHOUT INCIDENT...

STILL CAN'T GET THAT INCIDENT OUT OF MY MIND--

SAY, ROCK-- WHAT'VE YOU GOT THERE?

HUH? OH-- JUST AN AD-- IT WAS IN OUR BOX AT THE POST OFFICE!

LATER...

HOLD IT! SOMETHING ELSE IS SHOWING UP-- NOT FAR FROM WHERE THAT MAZE APPEARED! LET'S GO, GUYS!

COUNT ME OUT, PALS!

WHAT ARE YOU DRESSED UP FOR?

WHO TOLD YOU THIS TEAM WOULD HANG TOGETHER FOREVER? I MEAN-- CAN'T A CAT CUT OUT WITHOUT MAKING IT A BIG DEAL?

HUH?

OKAY--I'LL LEVEL! THAT LETTER I GOT WAS FROM A WRESTLING MANAGER... WANTS ME TO GO ON A WORLD TOUR! IT'S NOT JUST THE DOUGH... I WANNA DO IT FOR KICKS--

QUIT CLOWNING-- AND GET BACK INTO YOUR UNIFORM... BEFORE I CUT YOU DOWN TO SIZE!

IT WAS FUN WHILE IT LASTED... BUT I'M TURNIN' THIS IN! BEIN' A CHALLENGER WAS A ROUGH JOB, WORRYIN' ABOUT EVERYBODY ALL THE TIME! IT'S TIME I THOUGHT ONLY OF NUMBER ONE-- ME, ROCKY DAVIS!

MY... HEAD...

SOMETHING'S WRONG! CATCH HIM!

DON'T MAKE ME FIGHT YOU ON THIS -- I CAN TAKE ON ALL THREE OF YOU... BUT I WANNA BOW OUT NICE AND QUIET...

...I JUST WANNA QUIT... YOU KNOW... GIVE UP!

...I--UH... MY HEAD KINDA HURTS...

'FESS UP, BUSTER! WHAT'S COOKIN'?

THOUGHT I COULD CLEAR OUT OF HERE BEFORE THE THING HAPPENED AGAIN! WHY DIDN'T YOU GUYS LEMME GO? DIDN'T WANT YOU TO SEE ME CRACK UP...

THE BLAST AT THE MAZE-- REMEMBER? SOMETHING HAPPENED TO ME -- DON'T KNOW WHAT! I'VE BEEN GETTIN' THESE AWFUL HEAD PAINS... BLACKIN' OUT...

WE'LL GET YOU TO A DOCTOR-- RIGHT AWAY!

I ALREADY SAW A DOC! HE COULDN'T FIND NOTHIN'... TOOK X-RAYS... IS WAITIN' FOR A REPORT FROM A SPECIALIST!

SO THAT'S WHY YOU WANTED TO QUIT! YOU TOLD US ABOUT A MANAGER'S LETTER TO RIG AN EXCUSE WHILE KEEPING YOUR INJURY A SECRET!

I DIDN'T WANT TO RISK MAYBE GETTIN' YOU CATS KILLED IN CASE I GOT AN ATTACK WHEN WE WERE IN A TIGHT SPOT! SO I WANTED OUT!

YOU BIG, PROUD APE! YOU'RE STICKING WITH US TILL YOU'RE FIXED UP! WAIT HERE TILL WE GET BACK!

BUT NO SOONER DO THE OTHERS DEPART THAN...

NO MATTER WHAT THEY SAY I CAN'T LET 'EM STICK THEIR NECKS OUT ON MY ACCOUNT! ONLY ONE THING TO DO -- LIKE I SAID BEFORE... QUIT!

HOURS LATER...

A CIRCUS! THAT'S SOMETHIN' I CAN DO-- JOIN UP WITH A CIRCUS!

AND EVEN AS THE OTHER **CHALLENGERS** SPEED TOWARD THE CITY, THE FRIGHTENING THING REPORTED ON THE RADIO BECOMES MORE VISIBLE...

FINALLY, OUT OF THE THIN AIR MATERIALIZES A TERRIFYING **QUADRUPLE MAN**...

CR-RASH

WOWEE! FOUR VILLAINS FOR THE PRICE OF ONE! WE GOT HERE JUST IN TIME!... OR **DIDN'T** WE? ONE WAY TO FIND OUT... **LET'S** HIT 'IM!

SURE COULD USE ROCKY NOW! THIS CHARACTER--OR SHOULD I SAY, **CHARACTERS**--IS AS TOUGH AS STEEL!

?

?

?

?

THWACK

KA-WHAM

VOOM

HE SENT ME SPINNING LIKE A TOP--BEFORE I COULD LAND A PUNCH!

I MUST BE USING THAT GREASY KID STUFF... I GOT A REAL BRUSH-OFF!

HE WAS ONLY *PRACTICIN'* ON YOU GUYS--HE THREW HIS *SUNDAY* PUNCH AT *ME!*

ACROSS THE COUNTRY, ON-THE-SPOT TV CAMERAS FLASH THE SPECTACULAR BATTLE...

COME ON, CHALLENGERS!

BOY, WHAT I WOULDN'T GIVE TO BE THERE--FOUR JAWS TO SHOOT AT!

HEY--IT'S *ROCKY*-- *ONE OF THE CHALLENGERS!*

YEAH! IT *IS* ROCKY!

WHY AREN'T YOU WITH YOUR PALS, FIGHTIN' THAT FOUR-HEADED FREAK?

YEAH--WHY'RE YOU LETTIN' YOUR BUDDIES DO IT ALONE?

L-LAY OFF, KIDS...

SOMETHING'S WRONG -- OR ROCKY'D BE THERE!

YOU DON'T THINK HE... *QUIT* -- DO YOU?

I'LL BET *THAT'S* IT! THAT'S WHY HE'S NOT WEARING HIS UNIFORM!

NEVER THOUGHT *ROCKY* WOULD DO THAT, DID YOU?

I *STARTED* TO ASK HIM FOR HIS AUTOGRAPH --

WHAT FOR? WHO WANTS THE AUTOGRAPH OF A *QUITTER?* LET'S GET BACK TO THE TV!

THEY'RE RUSHING THAT FOUR-HEADED MONSTER! BOY, IS HE GONNA MAKE A HOLE WHEN HE FALLS!

YEAH, THEY'LL WIN, ALL RIGHT -- EVEN *WITHOUT* ROCKY!

9

PART 2 CONTINUED ON 3RD PAGE FOLLOWING

A COMICS THRILL YOU'LL NEVER FORGET!

They were THE WORLD'S STRANGEST HEROES!

- A GIRL WHO COULD SHRINK TO A FRACTION OF AN INCH OR GROW TO 60 FEET...
- A MAN WHO HID HIS RADIOACTIVE POWERS BEHIND SPECIAL BANDAGES...
- A ROBOT WITH A HUMAN BRAIN...
- LED BY AN INVALID WHO HAD THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE WORLD AT HIS FINGERTIPS...

Together they formed *The* DOOM PATROL to fight evil in all its forms!

WHOSE FACE DOES THE ENEMY SEE IN HIS SMOKING SIGHTS?...

GI JOE!

WHOSE FACE DOES THE ENEMY SEE IN HIS WILDEST NIGHTMARES?...

GI JOE!

BUT-WHO REALLY *IS* GI JOE?

THE SOLDIER WHO WALKS THROUGH EXPLODING STEEL?

THE FROGMAN WHO PLAYS TAG WITH A TORPEDO?

THE MARINE WHO CAN ONLY SPELL--*ATTACK*?

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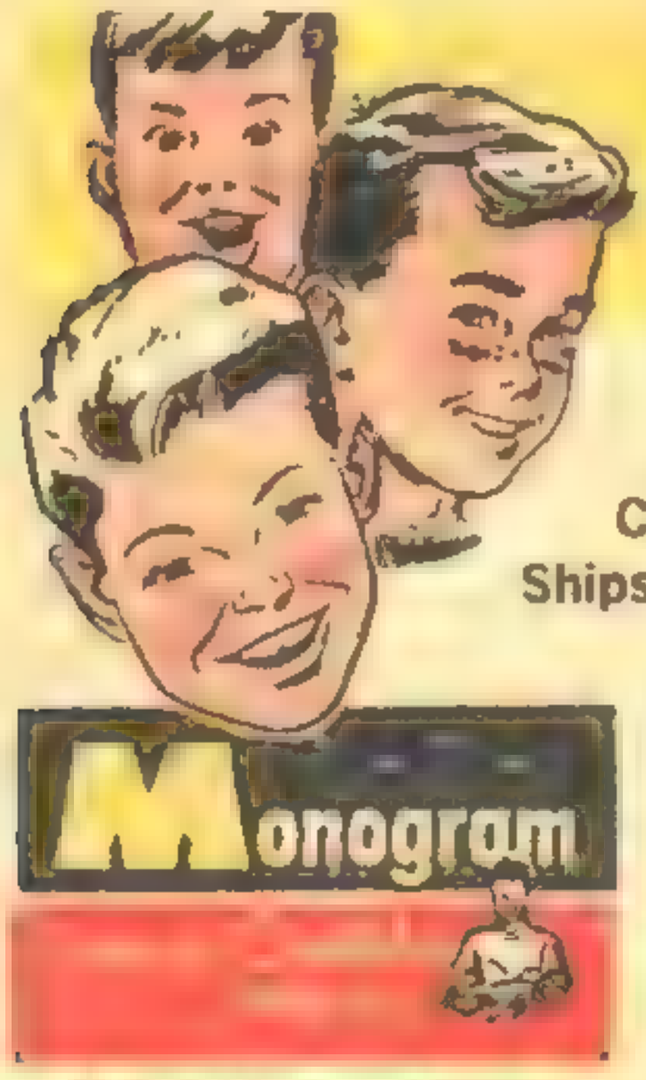
The HAND of CLAY!

ON APRIL 4, 1915, JOHN DEAN AND HIS FRIENDS WERE HAVING A GOOD LAUGH AT HIS EXPENSE! HE HAD BEEN TRYING TO DRIVE HIS BALL OUT OF THE SAND TRAP FOR SOME TIME, WHEN HE NOTICED ...*A HAND STICKING OUT OF THE SAND!*

GINGERLY, HE REACHED OVER AND BRUSHED BACK THE SAND, WHEN, TO HIS SURPRISE, THE *HAND ROLLED FREE!* AS EVERYONE ROCKED WITH GLEE, DEAN REALIZED HE'D BEEN TAKEN IN BY A TRICK... *A CLAY HAND!* YET SOMETHING SOMBRE ECHOED IN HIM! THE GREEN FIELDS, THE COLORFUL FLAGS, THE TRESTLE OVERHEAD, EVEN THAT APPROACHING WHISTLE, *SOMEWHERE HE'D GONE THROUGH THIS BEFORE!*

"*RUN, RUN FOR YOUR LIVES,*" *HE SUDDENLY SCREAMED,* AS HE VIOLENTLY PUSHED HIS FRIENDS FROM THE SAND TRAP! LIKE THE PIERCING SHRIEK OF DOOM, THE TRAIN'S WHISTLE PRECEDED BY AN INSTANT THE *RENDING CRASH THAT FOLLOWED!* WHEN THE BEDLAM SUBSIDED, THE MEN, STILL ALIVE, THANKS TO JOHN, SAW THAT FROM BENEATH THE HISSING MASS OF TWISTED LOCOMOTIVE, A HAND SHOWED! IT WAS *JOHN'S HAND AND HE WAS DEAD!*

IN HIS DIARY, THEY LATER FOUND NOTES ABOUT A RECURRENT DREAM IN WHICH HE *FORESAW THE TIME AND PLACE WHEN "THE FLYING SCOTSMAN" LEAPED THE TRACKS NEAR THE FIRTH OF FORTH BRIDGE* AND CRASHED ONTO THE GOLF COURSE! HIS FRIENDS STILL HAVE *THE HAND OF CLAY!*



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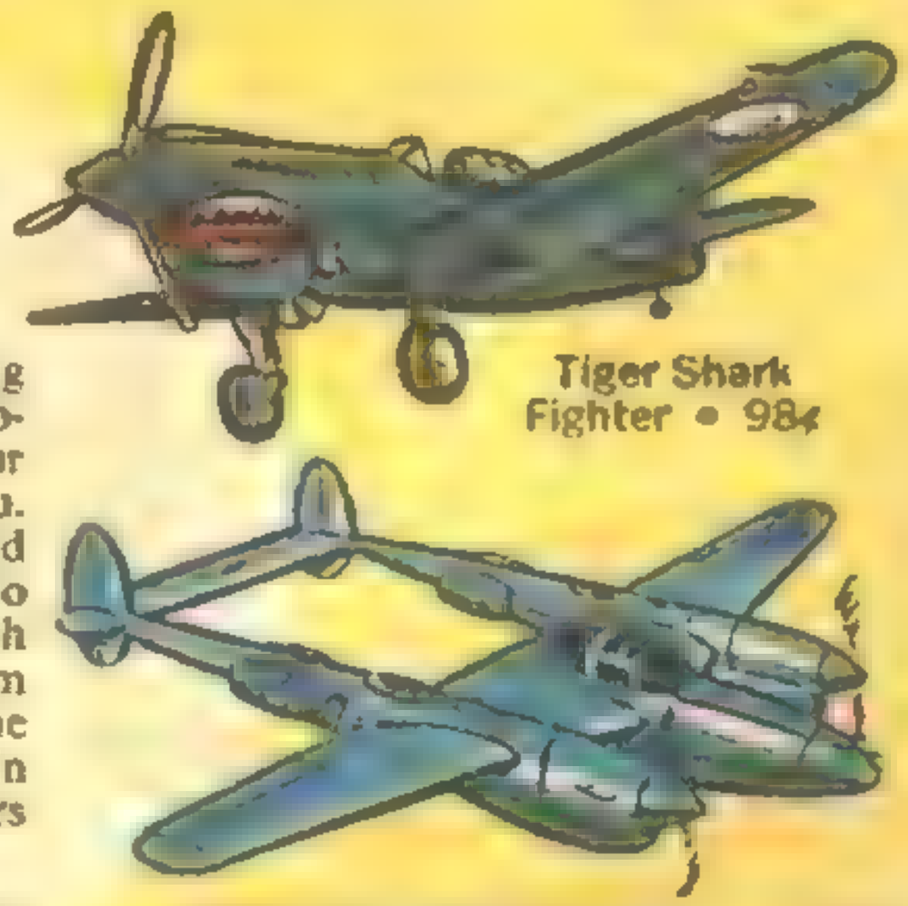

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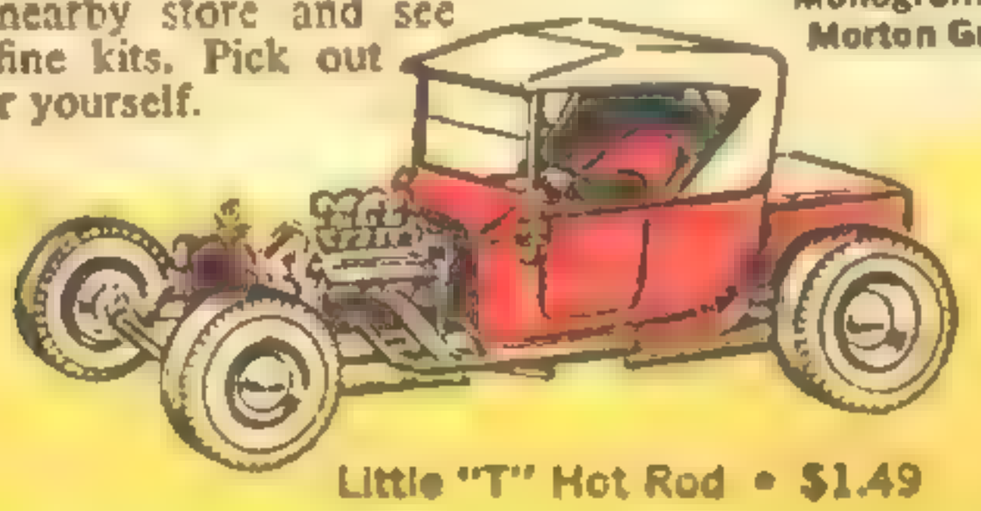

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PART 2

the CHALLENGER WHO QUIT!

AS ROCKY STARES AT THE TV SCREEN, HIS THREE PALS MAKE A SUPERHUMAN EFFORT TO BRING DOWN THE MONSTROUS **QUADRUPLE MAN**, BUT...

SWOONK

BLOOM

KWOOSH

THEY'RE CATAPULTED OUT..

YOW! I FEEL LIKE A PAPER CLIP SHOT OUT OF A RUBBER BAND!

BWAGGG

SUDDENLY, THE SEEMINGLY INVULNERABLE **QUADRUPLE MAN** BEGINS TO FADE...

IT'S GOING... GOING...

...GONE!

THE THING'S DISAPPEARED! THAT'S ONE WAY OF WINNING A FIGHT--OR DIDN'T WE?

MEANWHILE...

I'M SCRAMMIN' OUTA HERE! I CAN'T TAKE ANY MORE RAZZIN' FROM THOSE KIDS! I'M GONNA GET LOST SOMEWHERE... AN' STAY LOST!

WHAT WAS IT-- WHERE'D IT COME FROM-- WHERE'D IT GO?

WHO KNOWS? JUST LIKE THE MAZE, IT POPPED UP-- THEN VANISHED! I'M STYMIED!

I WAS HOPING TO FIND ROCKY WITH YOU CHALLENGERS! I'M DR. HANFORD, THE SPECIALIST ON HIS CASE! I HAVE A REPORT ON HIS X-RAY!

DOC, ARE WE GLAD TO SEE YOU!

LOOK CLOSELY! YOU'LL SEE WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOUR FRIEND!

I SEE IT, DOC! LET ME TAKE THIS! I'LL RETURN IT LATER--WITH YOUR PATIENT!

AS ROCKY WANDERS AROUND THE GROUNDS...

ANOTHER STARTLING THING JUST OCCURRED HERE! DR. HANFORD INFORMED THE CHALLENGERS WHAT'S WRONG WITH ROCKY! NO FURTHER WORD ON THE WEIRD QUADRUPLE MAN, HOWEVER...

HUH? THEY KNOW WHAT'S BEEN BUGGIN' ME? I'D BETTER SKIDOO BACK TO CHALLENGER MOUNTAIN -- FAST!

LATER...

GOTTA CONFESS, CATS--I WALKED OUT--BUT CAME BACK AGAIN! SORRY...

YOU DON'T HAVE TO WORRY ANY MORE, CHAMP! WE CAN CLEAR THIS UP! LET'S GET TO THE LAB!

THERE'S YOUR TROUBLE-MAKER, ROCKY--A TINY SLIVER OF METAL FROM THE BOMB WE SET OFF AT THE MAZE! IT'S IMBEDDED IN YOUR HEAD!

YOU KIDDIN'? YOU MEAN THAT LITTLE THING CAN FLATTEN ME?

THAT SLIVER IS LIKE A RECEIVER--PICKING UP MYSTERIOUS SIGNALS EVERY TIME ONE OF THOSE STRANGE APPARITIONS APPEARS! NOW...

IT'S THE SIGNALS THAT ARE GETTING AT YOU! THEY COME FROM SOME UNKNOWN SOURCE--THE SAME PLACE, I THINK, THE APPARITIONS COME FROM! THE CLOSER YOU GET TO THE SIGNALS, THE MORE THEY HURT YOU...

BUT AS SOON AS THE SLIVER'S REMOVED, YOU'LL BE YOURSELF AGAIN!

YEAH--BUT IF I LEAVE THE SLIVER IN, I CAN BECOME A HUMAN DE-TECTOR--AND LEAD YOU TO WHEREVER THE SIGNALS COME FROM! WE CAN FIND OUT WHAT'S BEHIND ALL THIS!

YOU'RE A GENIUS, ROCKY! MAYBE A MUSCLE-HEADED GENIUS, BUT, A GENIUS!

NO, WE CAN'T DO IT! IF WE GET ROCKY TOO CLOSE TO THE SIGNAL SOURCE IT COULD KILL HIM!

NOW WAIT A MINUTE! YOU GUYS HAVE BEEN GETTIN' YOUR LUMPS WITH-OUT ME BEIN' AROUND! JUST BECAUSE THIS CAT QUIT DOESN'T MEAN HE CAN'T COME BACK AGAIN! I'M IN--AS OF NOW!

LIKE THEY SAY, NEVER ARGUE WITH A CHALLENGER!

CHALLENGERS OF THE UNKNOWN

TAKING TO THE SKIES AGAIN, CIRCLING VAST AREAS, THE **CHALLENGERS** TRY TO "TUNE ROCKY IN" ON A SIGNAL EMANATING FROM THE MYSTERIOUS UNKNOWN, WHEN...

I **FEEL** IT, ACE -- I **FEEL** IT! **WE'VE MADE CONTACT!**

ALL RIGHT, ROCKY-- FROM NOW ON IT'S YOUR SHOW! TELL ME WHERE TO GO!

AS THE SIGNAL GETS **STRONGER**... **STRONGER**...

LOOK, YOU BIG SHOW-OFF -- SURE YOU CAN **TAKE** IT?

LAY OFF, SONNY! ACE, YOU'RE ON COURSE -- KEEP GOIN' -- STRAIGHT AHEAD!

WITH NIGHTFALL, THEY LAND ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF THE CITY -- NOT FAR FROM WHERE THE APPARITIONS APPEARED...

THAT WAY -- STRAIGHT THAT WAY... AN' DON'T YOU CATS TRY TO GO WITH-OUT ME... I'M OKAY... OKAY!

HE'S EARNED A TICKET TO THE SHOW! COME ON... I SEE SOME-THING AHEAD!

THIS IS IT... THIS IS IT...

WAIT HERE, CHAMP! YOU DID YOUR JOB! WE'RE GOING TO OPEN UP THAT PLACE LIKE A SARDINE CAN -- AND KILL THAT SIGNAL!

ARRAAHH

BZZZZ BZZZZ

WHAT KIND OF A PLACE IS THIS?

IT'S GOT SO MANY BIG DOORS, LIKE A HOTEL FOR GIANTS, *HEY*-- LOOK AT THE GUY OVER THERE WITH THE FLASH GORDON HELMET!

HE'S DEAD! PROF, SHUT OFF THAT SWITCH!

NO SOONER IS THE SWITCH CLOSED THAN ROCKY RECOVERS IMMEDIATELY...

WHEW! WAS I OUT COLD! WHAT'D WE FIND, PALS?

PLENTY-- AND THE ANSWER TO EVERYTHING... AN ANSWER THAT'LL MAKE YOU THINK YOU FLIPPED!

THAT MAN WITH THE FUNNY HAT WAS DR BURKE, WHO WAS EXPERIMENTING WITH A MACHINE HE INVENTED THAT TURNED **THOUGHT INTO MATTER!** HE DID THIS FOR A GOOD CAUSE...

THE **MAZE** AND THE **QUADRUPLE MAN** WERE **MATERIAL** THINGS ORIGINATED FROM **THOUGHT!** BURKE STORED THEM IN HUGE BATTERIES HERE-- IN THE SAME WAY **POWER** IS STORED IN A BATTERY!

THE **MAZE** REPRESENTED MAN'S **FRUSTRATION**-- THE **QUADRUPLE MAN,** MAN'S FOUR WEAKNESSES-- **HATE, GREED, REVENGE** AND **ENVY!** BURKE MADE THEM IN THREE-DIMENSIONAL FORM, TO LEARN HOW THEY COULD BE CONTROLLED!

THE SWITCH WE SHUT OFF SUPPLIED POWER TO THE MATERIALIZED THOUGHTS, WHICH SOMEHOW LEAKED OUT OF THEIR "BATTERIES"-- AND GAVE ROCKY A HARD TIME! WHAT KILLED BURKE? MAYBE HIS BRAIN SNAPPED UNDER THE STRAIN!

THERE'S STILL ONE MORE OF HIS THOUGHT CREATIONS LOOSE -- MAN'S FEAR!
YEEOW! IT'S MR. SPOOK HIMSELF!
HE'S BROKEN FREE--AND PROBABLY HAS ENOUGH POWER STORED UP TO RUN REAL WILD! BOYS, WE GOTTA CUT HIM DOWN TO SIZE!
H-AA-A-A-HA-A-A-A
KWAKOOM
CR-ACKLE
WOWEE! HE LAUGHED SO HARD--IT ALMOST KILLED US!

SLOWLY, PAINFULLY, ACE STIRS...

HE'S MAKING US LOOK LIKE PUNK AMATEURS...

...ONLY ONE WAY TO EVEN THE ODDS...

...AND THIS IS IT!

AS ACE CONCENTRATES DUPLICATE CHALLENGERS MATERIALIZE...

FAST THINKIN', ACE! WHAT ARE WE WAITIN' FOR?

YEAH, NOW WE CAN FIGHT HIM ON HIS OWN HOME GROUNDS! LET'S GO!

HA-HA-HA-HA-HA-HA

I'LL JAM THAT LAUGH RIGHT DOWN HIS THROAT!

CRACKLE

LET'S SEE WHAT MAKES THIS THING TICK!

BR-R-R-R

A FIST SLAMS AGAINST FEAR'S FACE...

HEY! IT'S EMPTY! THERE'S NOTH N' THERE!

AND NOTHING'S UNDER THE BIG SCARY CAPE EITHER!

LIKE THEY SAY ABOUT MOST FEARS... IT WAS ALL IN THE MIND!

WE'RE DISAPPEARING-- JUST LIKE THE MAZE AND THE QUADRUPLE MAN...

17

HEY! NO MORE PAIN! I SUDDENLY FEEL GREAT!

THE GHOST SHOW'S OVER-- AND YOU'LL FEEL EVEN BETTER WHEN THEY GET THAT SLIVER OUT OF YOUR HEAD! MEANWHILE, CHUM-- YOU'RE STILL A CHALLENGER! GLAD TO HAVE YOU ABOARD!

The End

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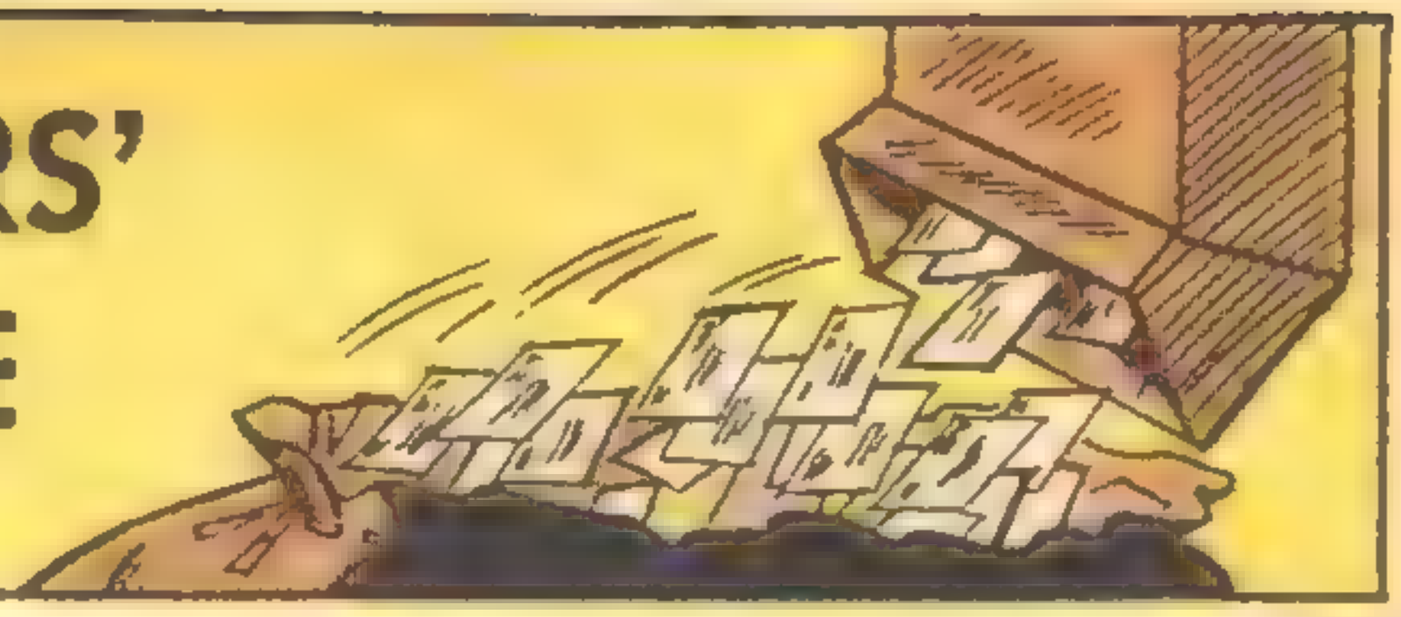
CHALLENGERS' MAIL CHUTE



Dear Editor: You've had some wonderfully imaginative villains in past stories who seem to have disappeared for good. Has it ever occurred to you to bring them back to face our *Challengers* again? — Howard Walker, Wagner, O.

Not only has it occurred to us, but we've already begun work on the enterprise. But we've gone you one better, Howard. Instead of recalling a former Challenger *foe now and then, we're teaming up four of them in an all-out strike against our heroes. Right now on Bob Brown's drawing board is an exciting opus called "The League of Challenger-Haters," which will co-star Kra, Volcano Man, Drabny, and Multi-Man. You'll be seeing it soon!*

• • •

Dear Editor: I think CHALLENGERS is one of the best books, but I would like to see their uniforms changed after all this time. Another suggestion is to return Gaylord Clayburn, the fifth *Challenger*. — Richard Wolf, Baltimore, Md.

From time to time, readers have recommended a switch in the Challengers' *uniforms, but we've been reluctant to do so to indulge a minority's whim. Moreover,* Superman, Batman, Wonder Woman, The Flash *and a whole host of famed comic characters too numerous to mention have retained their original costumes through the years. However, if the vast majority of you do prefer a new wardrobe (a similar case occurred with THE DOOM PATROL), we'd like to hear from you. Whether Gaylord reappears is also up to you. Won't you let us know?*

• • •

Dear Editor: I'd appreciate it very much if I could obtain two past issues of CHALLENGERS, etc. — Charles Hammersmith, Portersville. Pa.

To Charles Hammersmith, the foregoing Richard Wolf, Ed McLaughlin, Doris Katz and others who've written wishing to buy back numbers, we regret to say that we are unable to fulfill these requests. The best way to make sure you get every issue of CHALLENGERS is by subscribing. Right now, we're making a big-bargain offer, which you can't afford to miss. For details, see the advertisement in this issue!

• • •

Dear Editor: The yarn about the *Challengers'* kids, "Phantom of the Fair," was okay, but I'm still more interested in seeing stories in which our boys meet their future brides. —Steve Perrin, Summit City, Cal.

Anybody second the motion? Let us know! We aim to please!

• • •

CHIT-CHAT FROM THE MAIL CHUTE: May we thank the many fans who took the time to visit us at our offices this past summer to exchange greetings, to be introduced to artists and writers, to see our staff at work, and to ask innumerable questions. They came from such places as far-off Seattle to nearby Long Island. We hope they enjoyed their visit as much as we did, and we look forward to their return next year . . . Baltimore's *Richard Wolf* demands space again with the announcement of the formation of a CHALLENGER Fan Club . . . The Albuquerque Fan Club, via president *George Barbera*, sounds a loud cheer for "Time Bomb on Holdout Island" in No. 38.

Michael Spaulding, a new reader, has become so absorbed with the CHALLENGERS that he hopes at least eight issues are printed each year. In order to catch up with past books, he's willing to buy No. 1 through No. 34. Address him at 5923 So. Loomis Blvd., Chicago 36, Ill. . . . Anybody want to sell *Richard Wolf*, 5321 Todd Ave., Baltimore, Md. No. 1? Both of these gentlemen, plus others who've written in from time to time, might contact *Walt Beard*, 3417 So. 173rd, Seattle 88, Wash., who's disposing of his entire collection!

To *Gail Sutton*, Oracle, Ariz.; *David Singer*, Rochester, N.Y., *Walter Price*, So. Hadley Falls, Mass., and others who've asked for CHALLENGER pictures, we're delaying sending them until we've decided whether their uniforms will be changed! . . . If anyone wondered, as did *Robert Paul*, why Ace didn't walk around that ray in "The Triple Terror of Mr. Dimension," he didn't have time. It flashed on him as it struck the ground. Also the metal robot in "The Last Days of the Challengers" obviously was made of a rust-proof alloy.

"I think the *Challengers* are the greatest thing since the invention of bubble gum!", writes *Naomi Gadbois* from Ottawa, Canada. "Ace is simply wonderful. Prof is fabulous, too. I adore Rocky, and I'm madly in love with Red. But what happens to letters that are not published? Are replies returned to the writers?" (Yes, always—but letters like yours we'd always print!) . . . Another CHALLENGER Fan Club heard from, this unit called the T & S for Todd and Seward Avenues, Baltimore. Its four charter members sign themselves *Chip (Ace) Graber, Paul (Prof) Travers, Craig (Rocky) Graber*, and *Mike (Red) Trott*.

Other interesting letters received from Soldier *Bob Wilson*, recently returned to Ft. Hood, Tex., after a two-months' mock-war field problem . . . *Marcus Smith*, Milwaukee; *David Monroe, Jr.*, Waynesboro, Va.; *Donald Eric Roby*, Blanchester, O.; *David Webb*, Yorkville, N.Y.; *Chucky Lorenz*, Pensacola, Fla.; *Henry Noe*, Dayton, O.; and *Drew Carpenter*, Sweeny, Tex.

Address all post cards and letters to CHALLENGERS OF THE UNKNOWN, National Periodical Publications, 575 Lexington Ave., New York 22, N.Y.

WILLY and DILLY

COME IN, DILLY. I WANT TO SHOW YOU SOMETHING.

WE GOT A NEW TABLE TENNIS SET!

IT LOOKS SWELL. HOW ABOUT A GAME?

I CAN'T SEE OVER THE TOP!

ME NEITHER, BUT I GOT AN *IDEA*--

HOW'S THIS?

END

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A LEGION OF DEATH CHEATERS SPECIAL

CHALLENGERS OF THE UNKNOWN

TO THESE FOUR WHO LIVE ON BORROWED TIME, EVERY DAY IS A CHALLENGE -- **TO LIVE, OR TO DIE!** ALWAYS PUSHED TO THE THRESHOLD OF SOME UNKNOWN DOOM, THERE HAVE BEEN TIMES WHEN THEY ALMOST DIDN'T MAKE IT BACK! NOW, THE **CHALLENGER** IN DESPERATE TROUBLE IS **PROF,** WHO SUDDENLY FINDS HIS LIFE TICKING AWAY, WITH ONLY...

2 HOURS TO DIE!

I'M TALKING TO PROF BY RADIO-PHONE! HE'S **TRAPPED** DOWN THERE IN A TNT-CHARGED SUB... HIS BORROWED TIME'S RUNNING OUT... AND WE CAN'T HELP HIM!

SURE... IT HAD TO HAPPEN... SOME DAY... BUT AT LEAST THE OTHER GUYS ARE SAFE UP ABOVE...

TICK TICK TICK

CHALLENGERS OF THE UNKNOWN

SWEATING OUT THE INEVITABLE EXPLOSION, THE DEEP SEA-DIVING **CHALLENGER** PONDERS HIS GRIM FATE...

TICK TICK TICK

FUNNY--ONE MINUTE YOU'RE ON A ROUTINE MISSION... NEXT THING YOU'RE TRAPPED, WITH A **TIME BOMB** TICKING YOUR LIFE AWAY...

"IT SEEMED LIKE **YEARS** AGO, ACTUALLY IT WAS ONLY HOURS, THAT WE WERE CALLED IN TO CHECK LANDSLIDES THREATENING AN OIL CREW DRILLING ON THE OCEAN FLOOR..."

KA-BOOM

"WHY WERE THE **CHALLENGERS** CALLED IN? BECAUSE I'D SEEN PERFECTING A ONE-MAN SUB THAT COULD OPERATE AT GREAT DEPTHS..."

WE PULLED UP OUR EQUIPMENT TILL YOU FINISH, PROF! BUT IT SOUNDS **RISKY!**

DON'T WORRY ABOUT PROF--HE'S HALF FISH! GO GET 'EM, TIGER!

I'M READY ANY TIME YOU ARE! SOON AS WE LOAD THE BOMB ABOARD THE SUB, YOU CAN LOWER AWAY!

I'LL PLANT THE EXPLOSIVE WHERE A CONTROLLED BLAST WILL SHAKE OFF ALL LOOSE BOULDERS! THAT'S SURE TO STOP THE LANDSLIDE THREAT!

DRILL PIPE

LANDSLIDE

THIS SPECIAL SUIT WITHSTANDS PRESSURE AT DEPTHS WHERE NO MAN EVER HAS GONE--JUST IN CASE I HAVE TO SWIM HOME!

AW-W-W! NOTHIN' IS GONNA GO WRONG, CAT! THIS IS STRICTLY ROUTINE!

"STRICTLY ROUTINE! OH, SURE-- LIKE A G.I. PLATOON CAKE-WALKING THROUGH A MINE FIELD ON A ROUTINE PATROL--OR A FIGHTER PILOT ZIGZAGGING UP FLAK ALLEY ON A ROUTINE MISSION..."

LOWER AWAY-- I'LL KEEP IN TOUCH BY RADIO-PHONE!

"THEY LOWERED ME OVER A SPOT SELECTED ON THE CHART--A NICHE THAT LOOKED LIKE SOMETHING HAD TAKEN A BITE OUT OF THE SIDE OF THAT UNDERWATER HILL...

OKAY--LET GO! I'M ON MY OWN NOW!

"I MANEUVERED INTO THE NICHE, AND SET THE BOMB TO GO OFF IN HALF AN HOUR--GIVING ME PLENTY OF TIME TO SURFACE..."

ALL SET, PALS! I'LL DROP THE BOMB OUT THE ESCAPE HATCH, THEN POP UP! SEE YOU IN A FEW MINUTES... OH-OH--SOMETHING'S WRONG!

R-RUMBLE

THE HILLSIDE'S MOVING!

TICK TICK TICK

I'M BEING BOMBARDED-- BY FALLING STONES! GOT TO GET RID OF THE BOMB AND WHIP OUT OF HERE!

TICK TICK TICK

PROF-- DEACTIVATE THE BOMB!

SOMETHING'S JAMMING THE HATCH! CAN'T GET IT OPEN!

CAN'T! I CAN ONLY PUSH THE TIMER--GIVING IT FULL DELAYED ACTION... TWO HOURS!

TICK TICK TICK

CAN YOU SMASH THE PLASTIC DOME AND GET OUT?

EVEN ROCKY COULDN'T DO IT-- WITH A SLEDGE HAMMER! BUT DON'T WORRY, PALS-- I'VE GOT TWO HOURS GOING FOR ME--I'LL THINK OF SOMETHING! HMM... I'VE GOT IT!

TICK TICK

ACE--LISTEN! YOU'RE GOING **FISHING!** LOWER YOURSELF WITH A CABLE--A GRAPPLING HOOK ON THE END!

THAT'S IT, PAL! SING OUT THE INSTRUCTIONS! WE'RE NOT STICKING YOU DOWN THERE WITH A LAP-FUL OF DYNAMITE!

I'VE GOT RE-BREATHER EQUIPMENT, PROF--WHAT NOW?

AS THE WINCH PLAYS OUT THE CABLE, GUIDE THE HOOK DOWN TOWARD ME-- AND TRY TO HOOK ON! BUT DON'T COME DOWN TOO FAR YOURSELF-- THE PRESSURE WILL MURDER YOU!

DOWN DOWN GOES THE **CHALLENGER...**

I'LL HAVE YOU IN A JIFFY, PROF!

REMEMBER-- DON'T GET BRAVE AND TRY TO COME TOO FAR!

TICK TICK

BUT UNABLE TO HOOK THE SUB, ACE GOES DEEPER... DEEPER...

THE PRESSURE'S BEGINNING TO CLOSE IN--LIKE A BIG IRON HAND CRUSHING ME... BUT I'VE GOT TO GO EVEN LOWER...

GOT IT--GOT IT, AT LAST! B-BUT... I'M BLACKING OUT...

TICK TICK

ACE! ACE! WHAT'S WRONG? **ANSWER ME!**

SHORTLY, WHEN A SEEMINGLY LIFELESS BODY FLOATS TO THE SURFACE...

PROF! ACE IS OUT COLD... BUT ALIVE!

THE DOPE! HE RISKED HIS LIFE FOR ME... NOW HE'S GOT THE **BENDS!** RED, RUSH HIM INTO THE SHIP'S COMPRESSION CHAMBER!

THEN, ALL THOUGHTS AGAIN ARE ON THE TRAPPED **CHALLENGER** BELOW...

RRRRRR

YOU'LL BE ABOARD IN A SEC, PAL-- THEN WE'LL HAVE A GOOD LAUGH ABOUT THIS!

RRRR

HOW WE DOIN'?

WE'LL KNOW IN A MINUTE... BUT TAKE IT EASY WITH THAT CABLE! PULL GRADUALLY! I'M WEDGED IN **TIGHT...**

... AND ANY **SUDDEN** TUG MIGHT BREAK THE CABLE! TELL THE--

RRRR

TICK TICK

SNAP

IT SNAPPED!

TICK TICK TICK

WE FLOPPED LIKE A PANCAKE HITTING THE FLOOR! AND ACE TOOK A BEATING... FOR NOTHING! NEARLY ONE HOUR GONE--!

WE'RE NOT LICKED YET--I'VE GOT ANOTHER PLAN!

RED! THERE SHOULD BE SOME SMALL BLASTING CHARGES ABOARD! GET ONE -- COME DOWN THE HILLSIDE:: **BUT NOT TOO FAR**... DROP THE CHARGE NEAR THE BOULDER THAT'S PINNING ME IN! THE EXPLOSION **MIGHT SHAKE** ME FREE!

SOON THE FAMED MOUNTAIN CLIMBER STARTS HIS DESCENT...

WE'RE LUCKY, PAL! THEY HAD **ONE** BLASTING CHARGE LEFT! I'LL GET AS LOW AS I CAN-- TRIGGER IT-- AND DROP IT NEAR THE BOULDER!

SUDDENLY, WITHOUT WARNING...

PROF! ANOTHER LANDSLIDE--AND I'M... I'M **HIT!**

R-RUMBLE

WHEN THE WOUNDED **CHALLENGER** IS BROUGHT TO THE SURFACE...

I LOST THE CHARGE... I LET PROF DOWN... LEGS AND ARMS HURT... ROCKY--IT'S UP TO YOU NOW!

DON'T WORRY OL' BUDDY! **THIS** CAT'LL BRING OUR BOY UP... **SOMEHOW!**

WITH YOUR BRAINS AND MY MUSCLE, WE CAN BEAT THIS, SO YOU TELL ME WHAT TO DO, PROF--NOT MUCH TIME LEFT!

LOOKS LIKE OUR CARDS ARE PLAYED OUT, PAL... LESS THAN AN HOUR LEFT! BESIDES, I DON'T WANT YOU GETTING BUSTED UP LIKE ACE AND RED!

KNOCK IT OFF--OR I'LL COME DOWN THERE AN' PUNCH YA IN THE NOSE! GET YOUR THINKIN' CAP ON--AN' COME UP WITH AN ANSWER!

AS THE TICKING BRINGS THE FATAL CLIMAX CLOSER AND CLOSER, THE PAST FLASHES BEFORE THE TRAPPED **CHALLENGER'S** MIND...LIKE THE TIME THEY FOUGHT THE **CYCLOPS**...

ANOTHER SCENE RE-CREATES THEIR BATTLE WITH THE FLYING FISH-MAN...

THIS IS MY LUCKY DAY-- NEVER THOUGHT I'D GET THREE PRIZE SPECIMENS LIKE THESE!

YOUR LICENSE JUST RAN OUT! ANYWAY, YOU NEED YOUR WINGS CLIPPED, DADDY-O!

!!?

POP

THIS IS ONE FISH THAT WON'T GET AWAY!

SUDDENLY, PROF SNAPS OUT OF IT...

ROCKY! WE'VE MERE MINUTES LEFT-- ONLY ONE LAST CHANCE TO FREE ME! YOU LISTENING?

LIKE I'M ALL EARS!

TICK TICK

SOON...

READY, PROF! WE LOWERED AN ANCHOR ON THE CABLE-- JUST AS YOU SAID-- AND THE DERRICK'S READY TO START SWINGIN' ME!

THEN SWING IT, BUSTER! HIT THE BOULDER WITH THE ANCHOR!

HERE GOES...

TICK TICK TICK

EVERYTHING!

TICK TICK

KA-WHAM

TICK TICK

I'M CLEAR, ROCKY-- CLEAR! I'M PITCHING THE BOMB OUT AND COMING UP! JUST FOUR MINUTES LEFT!

GRAB ON-- HITCH A RIDE!

WILL DO, PAL--I DON'T WANT TO GET SHOOK UP BY THAT BIG FIRECRACKER!

Tick

VROOM

8

LATER...

WE TOOK A LITTLE BEATING, MAYBE-- BUT WE'RE ALL HERE--AND ALIVE!

YEAH--WE OUTRAN DEATH BY A FEW SECONDS-- WHICH PUTS US RIGHT ON SCHEDULE, DOESN'T IT?

THE End

BULLETS ZIP, AND I'M READY TO FLIP!

BUT WHEN I GET A BODY THAT'S BULLET-PROOF, YOU'LL NEED A BELLY THAT'S LAUGH-PROOF AGAINST GAGS THAT ARE FOOLPROOF!

THAT'S WHAT HAPPENS WHEN I BECOME "ROBERT THE ROBOT," A BOOK-LENGTH COMEDY BONANZA!

ON SALE AT YOUR FAVORITE NEWSSTAND! OCT. 8th